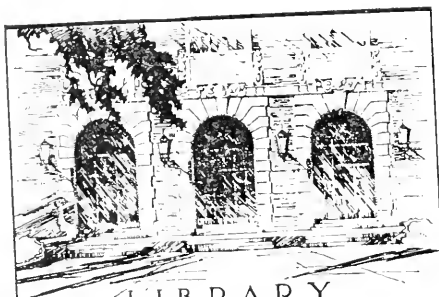


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HISTORICAL SKETCH



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ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY









HISTORICAL SKETCH  
OF THE  
ORIGIN, PROGRESS,  
AND  
WANTS.  
OF  
ILLINOIS COLLEGE.

JUNE, MDCCCXXXII.

SECOND EDITION.

JOHN T. WEST, PRINTER, NEW-YORK.

1832.

*The circumstances in which Illinois College had its origin, are thought to be of sufficient interest to justify a relation somewhat in detail. Its success has thus far exceeded the most sanguine anticipations of its founders, and for this very reason, it now labors under the most serious embarrassments. Greatly enlarged accommodations are vital to the prosperity, not to say, to the very existence of the Institution. An attentive perusal, therefore, of this sketch, by those who feel for the welfare of the West, is respectfully and earnestly solicited.*

*T. B.*

*W. B. The following persons in New-York are authorized to receive donations: Marcus Wilbur, No. 10 Cedar-street, and Cornelius Baker, No. 393 Greenwich-street, and also C. C. Dean, Sunday School Depository, No. 47 Cornhill, Boston.*



## HISTORICAL SKETCH, &c.

IN the month of December, 1828, a dissertation was read before the "Society of Inquiry respecting Missions," in the Theological Department of Yale College, "*On the motives, or rather encouragements, to active individual effort in the cause of Christ, derived from the example of eminent Christian philanthropists and the present state of the world.*"

For some time previous, a strong interest had been felt throughout New-England and other parts of the United States in behalf of the Valley of the Mississippi. The same spirit that pervaded other portions of the East reached Yale College. Many in that institution had long been offering the petition—"Lord, what wilt thou have us to do?" One of these, on his way home from the above-named meeting, asked himself the question—What can *I*, as an *individual*, do? A plan, which on some previous occasions had been faintly before his mind, now rose distinctly to view. Believing that education and religion must go hand in hand to the conversion of the world, he proposed to himself the formation of an association of pious students (to be increased from year to year) to go into some one of the Western States and found a literary institution, having a preparatory and a collegiate department. The former was designed to meet the common wants of the country in the education of teachers for primary schools; the latter to be placed on a level with the best American Colleges. As many of the Association as necessary were to act as Trustees of the Institution, and take their stations as preachers in the most important places in the state, here preach the gospel, form Sabbath schools, wake up the people as far as possible to the importance of common schools, seek out young men of promise and piety to be educated at the Institution, and in this way endeavor to create an impulse in all the departments of education, and make it felt, if possible, throughout the entire state. Another feature of the plan was to promote the emigration of active, intelligent, and pious laymen, to be gathered around each missionary station, to hold up the hands of the preacher and assist in urging on the cause of Sabbath schools, Temperance, and the various benevolent movements of the day. All these *little systems, in a sense*, were to revolve about the great central luminary, which was designed to send out light and heat over the entire region embraced within the limits of this organization. It was thought that by such a plan two very common evils in missionary

operations might be avoided: 1. Comparatively ineffectual expenditures of money and energy, arising from the want of system and co-operation. It was considered that, too often, men are sent out single-handed to accomplish a work which demands the combined physical, intellectual, and moral energies of a host.

2. The difficulty or impossibility of adding to the stock of knowledge which the missionary possesses when he enters the field. It was proposed that the Association should create a literary atmosphere for themselves, and raise high the standard of effort and attainment.

Such was the plan on paper. The question next arose—What *spot* in the great valley shall be selected as the theatre of these operations? The map of the United States was taken, and the several states and territories examined, and Illinois, from the superiority of its location and other circumstances, chosen as the field of effort. But have they any literary institution in this state? In searching for an answer to this question, the “Home Missionary” for that same month, which had just arrived, met the eye of the projector. It contained a communication from a Missionary, then laboring at Jacksonville, Illinois, in which he says: “A seminary of learning is projected, to go into operation next fall. The subscription now stands at between \$2,000 and \$3,000. The site is selected in this county, Morgan, and the selection made with considerable deliberation by a committee appointed for that purpose, and is one in which public sentiment perfectly coincides. The half-quarter section purchased for the site is certainly the most delightful spot I have ever seen. The object of the seminary is popular, and it is my deliberate opinion that there never was in any country a more promising opportunity for any who desire it to bestow a few thousand dollars in the cause of education and of missions.”

A letter was immediately addressed to this Missionary, giving the outlines of the plan described above, and inquiring whether the principles upon which the seminary was to be founded were such as would admit of co-operation on the part of the contemplated Association.

The next step was the *formation* of the Association. The individual now unfolded the plan to a few of his fellow students, for the purpose of enlisting them in the enterprise. It became at once in this little circle a subject of frequent and ardent discussion. The college vacation soon came, and after a short separation they returned and laid into common stock the results of their own reflections and those hints which they received from gentlemen of intelligence, experience, and literary attainments, with whom they mingled during their absence.

It will here be in place to notice some facts with reference to the *origin* of the Institution, so far as *Illinois* is concerned. A number of individuals, residing in various sections of that state, deeply impressed with the importance of education to all

the great interests of society and government, had been for years thinking, acting, and praying, with reference to the establishment of a seminary of learning, to accomplish the ends now aimed at by the friends and Trustees of Illinois College. But difficulties of the most serious nature hedged up their way. Population was every where sparse, and the inhabitants, almost without an exception, contending with the embarrassments of a recent settlement in a new and uncultivated country. After much time spent, however, by the active friends of the cause in visiting different sections of the state, the site above named was selected, and funds to the amount before stated pledged to the object by individuals residing in that state. But what would this mere pittance do towards effecting an object of such magnitude? Some of those who had been active saw this, became disheartened, and were ready to relinquish the enterprise. Others persevered; and, strong in faith, said, though they could not see exactly how it was to be effected, yet the necessity of such an institution was so imperious they believed that God in his providence would *somehow* open the way. In this state of things, the letter of inquiry from New-Haven arrived; and, as it may be well supposed, this "good news from a far country" was as "cold waters to a thirsty soul." They were surprised and delighted that the bare statement of their wants in an Eastern periodical should meet with so speedy and encouraging an answer.

Two letters in reply were immediately made out, expressive of their feelings, and urging a union of effort between the two parties. It was stated that there was nothing in the plan or principles of the seminary they had projected that would present any obstacles to this union, and that thus the objects originally contemplated by each might be effected. They also gave it as their opinion that Illinois presented one of the finest fields in the world for such an enterprise.

In the mean time, the most diligent search had been made by this little band of students for information respecting Illinois. In their hours of recess from study, frequent meetings were held for discussion and prayer, at which all the facts collected were examined with great care. The origin, principles, and success, of other literary institutions were inquired into, and obstacles in the way of this enterprise, so far as they could be anticipated, scrutinized. After this (as they thought) cool, thorough, and prayerful investigation, their minds rested with strong confidence in the conclusion that *the enterprise was practicable*.

But as yet no one of them was pledged to the work; and, except to a few individuals, the whole affair was a secret beyond the bounds of their own circle. For they knew the scheme might prove abortive; and, if at all, they chose not to fail before the world. They now proceeded to the *formation of the Association*. An instrument was drawn, obligating those who signed it to engage in this work, provided—1. That eight indi-

viduals should be found, who were willing to undertake it. 2. That the enterprise should be deemed practicable by intelligent men; and 3. That the providence of God should permit them to engage in it. The signing of this instrument was considered a most solemn transaction. It would certainly involve and perhaps *decide* the measure of their own future usefulness, and they knew not to how great an extent the interests of the church of Christ. They accordingly thought, and examined, and prayed long, till at last six individuals pledged themselves to the work.

Still, however, they were aware that, though the enterprise appeared grand and practicable to *themselves*, it might wear a very different aspect when presented to men of age, intelligence, and discretion. They said, We are young men; and though, in the ardor of our feelings, the way appears plain, yet we will not trust ourselves. A committee was therefore appointed to lay the plan first of all before the Faculty of Yale College, as a body of men pre-eminently qualified to judge in such a case. The result was favorable. The plan was thought to be formed with judgment, and to promise great results if carried into effect.

Their affairs now assumed so favorable an aspect that they were ready to consider themselves pledged to the work, though six individuals only had as yet signed the bond of union. Resolved, however, not to engage in the business rashly, so far as opportunity offered, they collected the opinions of men distinguished for their discernment and acquaintance with literary institutions. Some diversity of sentiment was found, and numerous objections raised—drawn principally from the recent settlement of the country. Yet after these had been carefully considered by the Association, they determined to proceed.

But how should they command the requisite *pecuniary* resources? They had none of their own; and many of them were even then struggling to defray the expenses of their own education. They had no character before the public, which is *of itself* sometimes sufficient to give an object favor in the community. And no little solicitude was frequently felt as the question went round their little circle—Will the benevolent public place so much confidence in us as to entrust to our care the means necessary to carry this project into effect? They then applied to the Faculty of Yale College (as most of them were graduates of that institution) for testimonials to their competency to this work. Those of the fullest character were promptly and cheerfully given, and the enterprise recommended by these gentlemen as one in a high degree deserving of public patronage.

The members of the Association now employed their vacant hours in making out their terms of union with the Trustees of the Jacksonville Seminary, and settling the principles upon which the College should be founded. These, prepared with great care, passed under the final revision of distinguished lite-

rary gentlemen. One of the Association was now appointed a special agent to visit New-York. He called a meeting of gentlemen in that city, before whom the whole plan was laid, together with the term of union. He said to them—We stand ready to enlist all our energies in this work; but we will not attempt it unless there is a reasonable prospect that the benevolent public will furnish those means which are necessary to carry it forward. The question was then distinctly proposed—*If we embark in this enterprise, shall we be sustained?* They said, with one accord, *You will*—the enterprise is a noble one—it is planned with judgment—it is just what is needed in the Western country—if successful, will produce important results. *Go on.*

The terms of union, which were immediately forwarded to Jacksonville, were in substance as follows: The seven young men associated (for that was now the number) shall be Trustees, and the stockholders in Illinois may also elect three, which ten shall constitute a Board, with the power of filling its own vacancies. Its number shall never exceed fifteen; and the remaining five shall be supplied at such times, in such manner, and on such conditions, as the aforesaid ten shall direct. On condition of the acceptance of these terms, the Association pledged themselves to furnish the Institution with instructors as fast as they were needed—\$2,000 in money at the time the union between the parties should be effected, and \$8,000 more within two years. These terms were acceded to by the stockholders in Illinois immediately on their reception, and information to this effect was returned to New-Haven in the spring of 1829. Thus, by a peculiar arrangement in Divine providence, these two Associations, that were laboring for the promotion of the same object while a thousand miles apart and entirely ignorant of each others operation, are brought together! Measures were immediately taken by the young men at New-Haven for the redemption of their pledge. The enterprise was then recommended by many distinguished literary and other gentlemen in Andover, Boston, New-York, Princeton, and Philadelphia; and, before the following winter, the whole sum was subscribed.

As soon as the agreement between the two parties was concluded, orders were given for the erection of a suitable building, and the purchase of a considerable quantity of land around the Institution, in order to furnish to the students facilities for manual labor. In September, of the same year, two members of the Association left New-Haven for Illinois, and the institution commenced its operations, with nine students, on the first Monday in January, 1830. It had previously received, by a vote of its patrons, assembled in the walls of its first and then unfinished edifice, the name of *Illinois College*. Only about thirteen months had now elapsed since the first *idea* of this Institution entered, as has been stated, the mind of a student at Yale College!

No sooner had these two pioneers reached the ground, and cast their eyes over the state, than they were convinced that a most inviting field for that very enterprise lay before them; and they have been gratified to discover, from subsequent observation, that the plan of operation which they originally marked out was well adapted to the situation of the country. They found the location an admirable selection, in a region of beautiful prairies and groves. The surface of the ground in that vicinity is thrown into heavy swells, resembling mountain waves after having lost a considerable portion of their elevation. In the eastern edge of a grove, which crowns one of these eminences, the college buildings are situated, and overlook Jacksonville, which lies down a regularly inclined plane, at the distance of one mile. To a spectator on College Hill, the village appears to occupy the centre of a circle, whose circumference, bounded by woodlands, sweeps around till it is lost on either hand behind the grove in the rear of the college buildings; while almost the whole surface of the prairie which composes the area of this circle lies directly under the eye. This, sprinkled over with cottages, farms, herds of cattle, and travellers seen in the distance and moving in every direction to and from the village, presents a scene of beauty seldom surpassed. The transition of that region from an entirely uncultivated state to its present condition has been marvellously rapid. The fires that have swept in lonely grandeur over those prairies from time immemorial, have but just begun to find their progress impeded by cultivated fields and roads and the various works of art. There, but a few years since, the "savage poised his spear, and the ranger chased him by his bloody track from grove to grove." In those very fields which now compose the college farm, the deer has but just ceased to feed, bound, or recline in security! and the yells of the prairie wolf even now occasionally break upon the ears of the student as he slumbers within classic walls! The location of the College is decidedly healthy, and has a surrounding country surpassed in fertility by none in the world. The village of Jacksonville was laid out in 1825, and now probably contains a population not much less than 1,000, on an area of less than half a mile square. It is situated 96 miles from St. Louis, 22 from steam-boat landing on the Illinois river, and not far from 90 miles from Vandalia, the capital of the state.

From the commencement of their operations, the Trustees have been employed in unremitting efforts to extend their buildings, their system of instruction, and all their arrangements, in order fully to meet the wants of that rising community. The buildings, at the present time, are the following: one brick edifice, designed partly for recitation rooms, and partly for the lodging of students, 65 feet in length by 36 in breadth, and two stories high, and affording at present a chapel sufficiently large to accommodate from 150 to 200 persons, and recitation rooms, with lodging rooms, for about 30 students. A framed house,

sufficiently large to accommodate a family, now employed for a boarding-house, but designed for a farm-house as soon as present arrangements can be completed. A barn, 60 feet by 40, a bake-house, and an ice-house, have also been erected. Connected with the Institution, and owned by it, is a farm of 228 acres, extending from one-fourth, to one-half of a mile, in every direction around the College edifice, and as well suited for cultivation as any which that most fertile country affords. The greater part of this will be brought under cultivation the coming season. There is, at present, a stock on the farm, consisting of 20 cows, 17 calves, 2 horses, and 2 yoke of oxen.

A shop is also to be fitted up, and furnished with the requisite tools, for performing most of those mechanical operations which are concerned in the working of wood; and both farm and shop are provided with a competent superintendent. The object of the Trustees is to furnish the students with the means of preserving their health, and, at the same time, to render that exercise, as far as possible, available for the reduction of their expenses. Those students who are disposed to take advantage of these provisions will share in the profits arising from the farm and shop in proportion to the amount of labor performed by each.

The Institution has a library, of from 600 to 800 volumes, and a small collection of philosophical apparatus. The present Faculty consist of a President, (Rev. Edward Beecher,) a Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, and a temporary Professor of Languages. The latter Professorship, it is the intention of the Trustees to fill *permanently*, whenever a suitable person can be obtained, and, as soon as possible, to establish others, in different departments.

The number of students has gradually increased from the commencement of the Institution, and is now fifty-one. The first Freshman Class, of four members, was organized last fall, and some additions to it are expected. Another will be formed the coming fall, (for which there are now seven candidates in the Institution,) and so on, till the four classes are completed. The Trustees, therefore, stand pledged to give the class, which has now entered the Collegiate Department, a *complete education*. But to do this, they must have apparatus, and all the machinery of a College, and this brings upon them an immediate pressure. More than forty of the students during the last term were engaged either in the study of the Languages or the higher branches of Mathematics and with few exceptions will pursue a full course of study.

All the members of the present Freshman Class have the ministry in view, and, previous to the month of February last, there were six others of the same determination. Since that time, (and it is recorded with most devout gratitude to God,) the Holy Spirit has descended, by his gracious influences, upon the Institution, and it is hoped that ten of the students have become the subjects of renewing grace. Some of these have

already resolved to go on foreign missions, and about twenty out of the fifty-one now connected with the College are preparing to preach the glorious Gospel of the Son of God!

Illinois, in size, falls but little short of all New-England, and in amount of fertile soil, and capacity of supporting a dense population, is undoubtedly the first state in the Union. "It abounds with navigable facilities—has large mineral resources, especially of lead and coal—and furnishes, in exhaustless abundance, the necessaries and many of the luxuries of life." In 1818, it was admitted into the Union as a State. Its population, in 1810, was 12,282—in 1820, 55,211—and in 1830, 161,055. But as the last census was taken before the arrival of the fall emigrants, we may safely estimate the present population at 175,000, and the ratio of increase, for some years to come, at 20,000 annually. The population *more than doubled* between 1825 and the taking of the last census. There are at the present time, more inhabitants in Morgan County, where the College is located, than there were in the whole state of Connecticut, when the foundations of Yale College were laid. Let any one, with these facts before him, glance at the local situation of Illinois, and he will no longer doubt that it is destined to become one of the most populous and powerful states in the Union.

No system of common school education is as yet established; and if we take the most favorable view of the subject, we must say that the prevalence of popular ignorance is truly alarming. From an investigation, made with considerable accuracy about a year since, it appeared that there were 550 common schools in the state, whose average continuance was a little less than four months in the year, and their number of attendants twenty-two. According to this, three-fourths of the 47,000 children and youth, between the ages of four and sixteen, were at that time entirely destitute of all means of instruction. And when speaking on the subject of education, the author of the "Guide for Emigrants," says, "Common schools are usually taught some part of the year, in most of the settlements, but more frequently by teachers wholly incompetent to the task than otherwise. This has been the case, particularly in former years. Some are decidedly immoral, and especially intemperate. In 1818 and '19, the author travelled through most of the settlements then formed in Missouri, and made it an especial object to visit, and inquire into the character of the schools then taught. According to my judgment, the result was, that one-third of the schools were public nuisances, from the immorality and incompetency of the teachers. One-third did about as much harm as good, and the remainder were of *some public utility!* It is presumed that *the same investigation would have brought forth similar results in Illinois.*" Such was the state of things in 1819, but since that time, important changes have taken place. A particular settlement, however, in Illinois, was visited in 1829, and the appalling fact ascertained, that twenty-



seven families, out of fifty-two, had no individual of any age or sex in them that could read! And an intelligent gentleman of Illinois, in writing during the past winter to a friend, says—“ I have been looking over the darkness that rests upon the southern end of our state, and I am overwhelmed at the sight! But it is a happy omen that public sentiment is beginning to set strongly in favor of education. Even Sabbath schools, which at first encountered every species of opposition, are extensively regarded with favor, and more than 180 were established in Illinois, during the last year. Consequently, it is a favored moment to plant literary Institutions. There is no College in the state, except that at Jacksonville. At St. Louis, Missouri, ninety-six miles distant, there is a Catholic Institution for the education of boys, where instruction is given almost gratis and which now numbers one hundred and fifty students.

The success of the Institution has thus far exceeded the most sanguine anticipations of its founders. Changes of great interest and importance, in every thing connected with the best interests of the state, have taken place during the last two years—and we have every reason to believe that, in time to come, they will be still more rapid and wonderful. The influence of this infant College has already been widely felt, and its friends and founders witness with pleasure its daily and rapid extension. About \$1,000 have recently been contributed to its funds, by individuals in that state. There is a perfect amalgamation of interest and union of effort between the Association formed at New-Haven, and the friends of education, whom they found in Illinois. And the Institution has already secured a large measure of public confidence.

The following testimony, from the pen of its able editor, is taken from a late number of the “ Illinois Monthly Magazine,” published at Vandalia, a work that has received numerous commendations in Eastern journals: “ The prospects of Illinois College have continued to brighten from the commencement of its existence. The establishment of a Seminary of the highest class, in so new a country as Illinois, was a hazardous experiment, the failure of which was confidently predicted by many, even of those who wished it success. But it was not lightly undertaken. We believe that *no similar Institution* was ever commenced with greater care, or a more sedulous attention to the removal of all obstacles to its usefulness and prosperity. *We have the most entire confidence in this Institution.* It is based upon a liberal and solid foundation, and has been managed thus far with great prudence.” The College roused to new efforts, throughout the state, those who had become almost disheartened, by laboring single handed, (and of course, at great disadvantage,) in the cause of education and morals. By this union of fresh laborers with those already on the field, an immediate and powerful impulse was given to various literary and benevolent operations, which has already been followed by the most cheering results.

An important crisis in the affairs of the Institution has now arrived. Greatly enlarged accommodations are vital to its prosperity and usefulness, not to say to its very *existence*.

All the rooms in the present building, designed for students, have, at the present time, each four occupants. This, as all who are acquainted with literary Institutions well know, operates as a most serious drawback upon their improvement, if not morals. Besides, the Trustees have been put under the painful necessity of saying to a number, who have applied for admission, there are no accommodations for you; and being unwilling to reside at so great a distance from the College as the village, or having tried in vain to get suitable accommodations there, (in consequence of the very recent and rapid settlement of the place,) they have returned to their homes. There are now six individuals in one county, who wish to become members of the Institution, and in all, about twenty cases of this description are known. Letters of inquiry have been received, in considerable numbers, from different parts of Illinois, and other states, and are continually increasing. The Trustees in the provision of accommodations, unexpectedly find themselves unable to keep pace with the wants of the community. After much deliberation, therefore, they have determined to erect, the coming season, a brick edifice 104 feet by 40, and four stories high, besides a basement for the purpose of cooking, and a dining hall. To this will be attached two wings, 38 by 27, and two stories high, for the accommodation of the families of the President, and one Professor. It is thought that important advantages will be gained by bringing the instructors more into contact with the students than is done in the generality of Colleges.

The library of the Institution is but just commenced, and the philosophical apparatus sufficient only to illustrate some of the simpler principles of the natural sciences. No permanent provision has been made for the support of those officers who have already been appointed, and their number must soon be increased. The Trustees feel that \$36,000 is the *least* sum that will enable them to accomplish *all* the objects which they have *immediately* in view. More than \$20,000 of this has already been secured.

Such then are the origin, principles, location, success, future prospects, and *present wants*, of Illinois College. And, in view of these, the Trustees might well ask, in the language of an "Appeal," published in their behalf, during the last year.—"Who is there, that is not interested in the welfare of the West? Who is there, that has not, or may not have, children, or other beloved friends, in those distant lands, whose prosperity should be to them dear as their own? Who is there, that is not interested in the future prospects of his own beloved country, or in the character of those who will soon make its laws? Who is willing that those should grow up in ignorance and vice, who are at no distant day to control the destinies of his own children, even though they remain at home, on their native

soil? Who is willing to overlook the relations of this nation to the world, and to the most sacred interests of man? Is it our own cause that we plead? Is it not rather that of unborn generations of our own country, and of the world? And who can be found, that will listen with indifference to such an appeal?

"We do not, indeed, expect to awaken in the breasts of all, that overwhelming tide of feeling which has filled our own, as the vast regions of the West have met our eye in all their greatness; and as in the midst of the wave of population, rolling on in ceaseless flood, we have called up before us future generations, thought of their destiny, meditated on our sacred obligations to promote their highest interest, and anticipated their future judgment on us."

It is by no means pretended that the destiny of the whole Valley of the Mississippi hangs upon the success of this *one* enterprise. But it has its importance, as a part of the great system of means designed to renovate the West. And could the founders of this Institution, give *individuality* to that responsibility which was assumed, when it was said to them at the outset—"go on"—they would reiterate the question, with ten-fold earnestness—"shall we be sustained?" And they would earnestly entreat all, who have had their sympathies called out in behalf of the empire that is rising in the West, to give the circumstances detailed in the preceding narrative, an attentive consideration. Who can fail to discover the hand of God, in the *origin* of this Institution? And in its *progress*, so marked have been the interpositions of Divine Providence in its favor, that its conductors have felt, at every step of its advancement, that they were treading upon sacred ground!

The *location* of the Institution has advantages almost unrivalled in the Valley of the Mississippi. Beautiful, healthy, and surrounded by a country of surpassing fertility, and easy of access from the great rivers of that region, every thing conspires to make it a favorite resort of students. Situated in a state that is rising in importance, with almost unparalleled rapidity, and from its peculiar local situation, and great natural resources, destined to exert a controlling influence, who can calculate the benefit of a College, whose pulsations shall send out a vital power to all the extremities of that community, from the earliest periods of its history? Those objections urged against its establishment, derived from the recent settlement of the country, and which were thought insuperable by those who raised them, have been found by experience to be based upon circumstances which in reality operate with power *in its favor*. At what period in a nation's history are intellect, prudence, moral principle, and comprehensive views, more important than when its *foundations* are laid? If the ground upon which we are to build, is *false*, so that the structure of the world to be built upon it, is *demolished*, then, and all the energies of the nation, as well as the money may be directed to the securing of those in a proper character. Of what use, then, are common schools, without an efficient

teachers? and how shall these be furnished without schools of a higher order! and who will teach these as they should be taught without a *College* to complete the system?

The influence of this Institution, mingled, as it has already been, with the very elements of society, can be made with facility to pervade, through numerous channels, the entire mass as it swells into maturity. Established in the infancy of the state, it will not hereafter be regarded as an alien, but an "old settler" that braved the dangers of the wilderness, and came in the periods of helplessness and darkness to enlighten and to bless. In full operation at this eventful period, when the future character of that state is to be moulded, it can use with great effect the plastic hand of education.

Patriots, philanthropists, and Christians, all agree that intelligence and moral principle, in exhaustless measure, must be poured into the Valley of the Mississippi, and the amazing energies of that rising empire sanctified. And no diversity of opinion exists as to the tremendous consequences to this nation and the world if it should not be done. All agree, too, that *colleges* must form a part of the stupendous system of means that is to effect it. But if colleges *must be planted*, and that upon a large and liberal scale, what spot more important, for *one*, at least, than Illinois! And what institution beyond the mountains has commenced a brighter career than the one at Jacksonville? For a long time, its projectors carried on their operations in silence. They were reluctant to create hopes that might be blasted, or to make promises that might never be fulfilled; but they are now ready to speak out. The experience of between two and three years has fully confirmed and greatly enlarged their original views of the importance of their enterprise. God has apparently blessed them at every step; and already have those things become realities which they at first saw in the distance, and viewed as being perhaps only the illusions of fancy?

"But," it is said, "yon talk of the boundless resources, and mighty rivers, and fleets of steam-boats, that crown that land; and why cannot the people themselves found colleges, and provide all the means which are necessary to secure their own intellectual and moral greatness?"

A short residence in that region, to witness the numberless embarrassments inevitably experienced in a new country—the moderate if not straitened circumstances of most of the inhabitants, and the heterogeneous character of the population—all with their own peculiar sentiments, and prejudices, and modes of transacting business—would be a sufficient answer to that question. But it may be asked—Whence are *principally* derived those resources which are expended at the West in internal improvements of every description! The reply must be—From Eastern capitalists. Why not then from similar sources extend a helping hand to the cause of *education*? It is true, however, that the time will soon come when the people *can*

build colleges. But if they receive not a proper bias in their *infancy*, what security have we that when the years of maturity have come, and the amazing resources of that world are developed, they will be *used* for the diffusion of intellectual light and moral influence? Is it said that this time is so near at hand that they may as well be let alone till it arrives? True, it *is* near at hand. That community will not take the usual slow growth of a century—it will, as it were, spring at a single bound from infancy to manhood! But no matter how short this interval—crowd it, if you please, into a single year—and not one iota is diminished from the power of this appeal. You have only taken those consequences which might well give importance and solemnity to an entire *century*, and suspended them upon a *single year*! No matter how rapid the transition from infancy to manhood—it is enough to say that this interval embraces the momentous period in which the *character* is formed. It is true that the God of nature has intersected the Valley of the Mississippi with mighty rivers which carry fertility, and open channels for commerce, through its vast length and breadth. He has there laid, too, exhaustless stores for the support of human beings; but so much the more important is it that those who control these boundless resources should be qualified to do it aright.

“Let that region become as populous as Massachusetts, which contains 610,014 inhabitants on an area of 7,800 square miles, or 78 to every 610 acres, and the population of this immense region will amount to 67,600,000. *The child is now born* which will live to see this result. Suppose its population to become equally dense with England, including Wales, which contains 207 to the square mile, and its numbers will amount to 179,400,000. But let it become equal to the Netherlands, the most populous country on the globe, containing 230 to the square mile, and the Valley of the Mississippi teems with a population of 200,000,000; a result that may be had in the same time that New-England has been gathering its 2,000,000.”\*

Now it is evident that the Eastern churches may as well attempt to send bread over the Alleghanies for the sustenance of that mighty population as to supply them *permanently* with preachers of the Gospel. Besides universal experience in benevolent operations, testifies that men, *as far as possible*, should be educated upon the spot where their labor is to be performed. And in our own country even, let a Missionary remove only a few parallels of latitude or longitude from the place of his nativity, and perhaps from one to three or five years, in the vigor of his days, a large proportion of his energies will be wasted in becoming acquainted with the peculiar sentiments and feelings of the people among whom he labors, in getting accustomed to their modes of doing business, or, what is worse, contending with idle prejudices.

In conclusion, then, it may be asked—Shall the Trustees be

\* Peck's Guide for Emigrants.

compelled to say to promising young men, who come perhaps from the haunts of poverty to the very doors of the Institution, and ask for admittance—"We have no accommodations"—and thus send them back to ignorance and obscurity, or perhaps to some other literary institution, to have their character moulded by the hand of a Jesuit? Illinois College has commenced a glorious career of usefulness, and its prospects are rapidly brightening. Shall it then be so crippled in its operations as to be able to send out over that land only a few scattered rays of light? This would defeat the very end of its establishment. If an effectual check is put upon the extension of its operations, it might almost as well be annihilated. But who is prepared to say that this light, kindled up on the very outposts of our nation, shall be extinguished? Shall those who are employed to plead its cause at the East, re-cross the Alleghies and say to their brethren who have long been toiling in that field—"We threw upon the canvass a vivid picture of your wants, and raised our voices to their utmost strength; but our appeal was not fully answered? You must toil on, and see the mighty harvest wave around you, and go to waste!" The peculiar circumstances in which this Institution had its origin—the obvious and simultaneous operations of the Spirit of God upon its founders—the many Divine interpositions in its favor since its establishment, with united voice, forbid it! Even patriotism and philanthropy forbid! Those who have toiled in its behalf, with the eye of faith see "*prosperity*" written by the finger of God upon its walls! Patrons have hitherto been raised up to supply its wants; and their names are embalmed in the memory of a grateful people; and its conductors now look around for others to come forward, and by their contributions remove those embarrassments which at present prevent its expansion.

It is known that loud and urgent appeals from the destitute portions of our land, as well as from the heathen world, are continually falling upon the ears, taxing the resources, and if possible *trying the patience*, of Eastern benevolence. But it will not always be so. Train up this western child "in the way he should go," and soon, instead of crossing the Alleghies to solicit aid, he will turn his own boundless resources into the channel of benevolence. Fountains of moral influence will burst out in every prairie and grove, and roll their streams over that land like its own mighty rivers! This son of the forest will then enlist his mature and gigantic energies in the cause of philanthropy and Christianity; and having freighted his own steam-boats with Bibles and Missionaries, will join the friends of his youth, on their way over the ocean for the conversion of the world!

THERON BALDWIN,

*Trustee and Agent of Illinois College.*

















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